

Power, Trauma And Collective Amnesia In One Hundred Years Of Solitude: Parallels In The Real World

Asma Mansoor

*Assistant Professor, Department of English, International Islamic University, Islamabad, Pakistan.
asma.mansoor@iiu.edu.pk*

Abstract

As history deconstructs itself at the conclusion of Gabriel Garcia Marquez's *One Hundred Years of Solitude*, a number of questions tend to surface out of the detritus of Macondo — questions that bear a direct relevance not only to the historical context of Latin America, but to the history of political and economic repression that has shaped human history as well. The novel chronicles the creation of repressive power structures and their recurring reduplication on various levels, ending with the apocalyptic destruction of Macondo. These power based discourse structures find direct parallels in the world's colonial history. If Macondo's symbolic range is expanded to incorporate those Third World countries that have endured colonial and dictatorial trauma, the canvas of *One Hundred Years of Solitude* proportionately finds allegorical parallels in the context of global colonial history. The pivotal question that arises here is whether the conclusion of *One Hundred Years of Solitude* implies that repressive mechanisms and the resulting traumas would only end with the annihilation of humanity. Is the novel a pessimistic view of humanity? In order to analyse *One Hundred Years of Solitude* from this angle, I have employed the interdiscursive method of research as posited by Critical Discourse Analysis to unravel the hierarchical structures interwoven within the novel. The text-context model has been utilised to delineate the reinstatement of domination in Macondo and its symbolic global counterparts by analysing the political discrimination and its traumatic outcomes for the residents of Macondo.

Keywords: Critical Discourse Analysis, trauma, domination, ideology, colonialism, Third World Countries.

INTRODUCTION

Foucault postulates in the *Archaeology of Knowledge* that history is arranged along two scales, that is, microscopic and the macroscopic, so that on each of these two levels, history is encoded and written in different ways. Hence there are multiple histories vis-a-vis the causal as well as the hierarchical relations that they encode. With these two scales running and intersecting each other, history becomes a complex interface of multiple discourses interacting, stimulating, replicating and liquidating each other. While ordinary historical texts tend to impose a totalising continuity or linearity upon historical progression, Foucault believes that this imposition is arbitrary and erroneous, forcibly imposed on discourses so

that they could be comprehended in isolation. Hence, such unities need to be dismantled if history is to be understood in a more objective manner. Gabriel Garcia Marquez's *One Hundred Years of Solitude* performs this very task. With a multi-layered structure, which on the surface level displays a regulated linearity, the novel breaks down the boundaries between various discourses, that is, political, historical, social, literary etc., to display how power, economics and repression have gone hand-in-hand in shaping human history. In doing so, the novel adheres to Foucault's demand for inviting an interdiscursive analysis of the hierarchical power structures that surface within the novel and their traumatic outcome seen in the destruction of Macondo.

When history deconstructs itself at the conclusion of Marquez's *One Hundred Years of Solitude*, a number of questions surface out of the debris. These questions not only bear a direct relevance to the historical context of Latin America, but also to the history of political and economic repression that has shaped human history all over the world. The novel chronicles the creation of repressive power structures and their reinstatement on various levels, ending with the apocalyptic destruction of Macondo. These events find direct parallels in the world's colonial history. If Macondo's symbolic range is expanded to incorporate those Third World countries that have endured colonial and dictatorial trauma, the canvas of *One Hundred Years of Solitude* proportionately finds allegorical parallels in the context of global colonial history. Keeping this premise in mind, I have endeavoured to explore whether the conclusion of *One Hundred Years of Solitude* implies that repressive mechanisms and their resulting trauma would only end with the annihilation of humanity.

Due to its melange like structure, it would not be erroneous to analogise *One Hundred Years of Solitude* as the codex Borgia canvassing the rise and fall of the Buendias (the metaphorical equivalents of the human race beginning with Adam, passing through the Deluge, the Biblical Plague and the Rapture, ultimately experiencing decimation in the Apocalypse). With "elements appropriated from a larger tradition" its themes, plot and style wind around each other in a helical pattern, adding "magic to its realism" (Petty 2000, p.162) so that *One Hundred Years of Solitude* leads to "yielding a superior level of metacommunication" (Giordano 1988, p.218), re-contextualising the discourse of humanity's past, present and future. In re-framing and transgressing the discourse of noesis, that is, perception and common sense, as well as disrupting the sense of the coeval time by collimating it with the past and future time frames, it becomes an aperture into human history. The novel, therefore, invites an exploration of the creation, replication, dismantling, transformation and re-creation of

various modes of repression in Macondo and the trauma that such repression engenders. It deconstructs and reframes the discourse of human civilization, working hand in hand with the gothic and the fantastic so that the world of human reality is subsumed within the fantastic. Through this strategy, the novel allegorically traces the different phases of human evolution, functioning as what Hayden White (1973) calls "metahistory" (p.2). It records time through the "transformation of chronicle into story" (White 1973, p.x) incorporating a surface sequence of events in various forms of emplotment so that Marquez, according to the standard defined by White, is both a historian and a fiction writer as he "'finds' his stories, unlike the fiction writer who 'invents' his" (White 1973, p.6). We notice that in *One Hundred Years of Solitude* Marquez and the gypsy Melquiades both invent and discover stories as events succeed each other within the self-contained capsule of a village, Macondo, which as a "visionary realm, is an Indian and Hispanic act of consciousness" (Bloom 2009, p.1). Its history starts from a prelapsarian state of idyllic bliss, surrounded by the swamp of isolation. The description of Macondo testifies to this fact: "To the south lay the swamps, covered with an eternal vegetable scum and the whole vast universe of the great swamp, which, according to what the gypsies said, had no limits. The great swamp in the west mingled with a boundless extension of water" (Marquez 1970, p.10). In this setting, Marquez not only extracts a story out of history but re-sketches history through story. Like a historian, he uses satire, comedy, tragedy and romance, but what makes him different from a historian is that instead of using only one mode, he blends them all. It is for this reason that the allegorical structure of the novel functions like an interface permitting multiple ideas to be allegorically interwoven, while specifically foregrounding the rise of totalitarianism. This opens up the space for the deployment of the discourse-historical approach to trace and evaluate parallels between the power structures surfacing in Macondo and their international parallels in colonial history.

MACONDO AND THE RISE OF TOTALITARIANISM

One of the major discourse strands that runs through *One Hundred Years of Solitude* is the rise of totalitarian systems imposed on the masses by the ruling elite. With the government sending its representative Don Apolinar Moscote as a magistrate to Macondo, the government enforces its own cultural stereotypes so that the masses can be conditioned according to the dominant ideology. With an official paper being the means through which orders are implemented, Don Apolinar imposes the topoi of the ruling elite as the following passage elucidates:

His first order was for all the houses to be painted blue in celebration of the anniversary of national independence. José Arcadio Buendía, with the copy of the order in his hand, found him taking his nap in a hammock he had set up in the narrow office. "Did you write this paper?" he asked him. Don Apolinar Moscote, a mature man, timid, with a ruddy complexion, said yes. "By what right?" José Arcadio Buendía asked again. Don Apolinar Moscote picked up a paper from the drawer of the table and showed it to him. "I have been named magistrate of this town." José Arcadio Buendía did not even look at the appointment. (Marquez 1970, p.57)

Analysed in the light of CDA as propounded by Norman Fairclough, the document that Don Apolinar waves about manifests itself as a symbol of authoritarianism that aspires to homogenise the thought processes and actions of the masses in line with the ideology of the ruling elite while suppressing their unique ways of living. The colour blue is a symbol of hegemony imposed to reshape the people's ideologies and bring them in line with the dominant power structures. According to Charles E. Bressler (2007) "This shaping of a people's ideology is, ..., a kind of deception whereby the majority people forget about or abandon their own interests and desires and accept the dominant values and beliefs as their own" (p.198). This form of deception is enacted and consolidated

through symbolic structures that act as political forces of representation. The colour blue emblemises the forces of totalitarian control that pervade into the day-to-day existence of the inhabitants of Macondo. However, what is significant is that initially, the people of Macondo do not submit to the regulatory policies of the Government

No one was upset that the government had not helped them. On the contrary, they were happy that up until then it had let them grow in peace, and he hoped that it would continue leaving them that way, because they had not founded a town so that the first upstart who came along would tell them what to do. (Marquez 1970, p.58)

However, this placidity is gradually disrupted as military might and ammunition become the manifest tropes of power in the novel which subjugate the masses into obeisance. The Orwellian notion of "Big Brother is watching you" (Orwell 1949, p.20) finds replication here, as Don Apolinar's document acts as a means of reality control. This finds clear parallels in history where state symbolism has been used by the regimes of Stalin, Mussolini and Hitler and many others after them. The imposition of Nazi symbolism, such as the black swastika on a red and white background and the Red Flag of the Socialist regime in Russia, etc., have been used by totalitarian regimes to highlight their allegiance to a particular philosophy. Moreover, governments across the globe send their henchmen to impose its philosophy on the masses as a part of the administrative state apparatus. In refusing an acceptance of this philosophy, the residents of Macondo display a Liberalist attitude in dealing with the issues of government regulation and control. However, this is merely the first step in the conversion of Macondo into a garrison state.

What is important to note here is that the document in the hands of Don Apolinar is in effect discourse provided by the hegemonic order to formulate new collective stereotypes so that the political and societal realities can be altered and controlled. Through this move, the associated imagery created in the people's minds

through the newly enforced colour symbolism is altered. As a consequence, the angle with which the masses perceive the reality around them and the notions they believe in are reciprocally reconstructed. This is the first step in generating a socio-cultural trauma which does not only shift the lens with which the people of Macondo read the world they live in, it is also the beginning of a political trauma that is internalised yielding its own mechanisms of resistance. The 'paper' thus becomes a means for legitimising coercive control and the appropriation of authority. Throughout history, documents and proclamations have been used to formalise and legalise the subversion of power structures. A glance at the history of Latin America reveals that Cortes' tyrannical approach towards the Amerindian tribes had the legal backing of the Declaration by the Pope Alexander VI.

We of our own motion, and not at your solicitation, do give, concede, and assign for ever to you and your successors, all the islands, and main lands, discovered; and which may hereafter, be discovered, towards the west and south; whether they be situated towards India, or towards any other part whatsoever, and give you absolute power in them. (Southey 1827, p.22)

In addition, the British Rule in the Indian Subcontinent was also legitimised through the proclamation of the Queen's Rule in India at the end of the War of Independence in 1857 and the enforcement of the Government of India Act, 1858. These parallels with world history reveal how various documents such as constitutions and party manifestos etc., have been used to control and enslave people, both by foreign colonizers as well as local dictators. However, this 'paper' does not always have to be a verbal text. It also symbolises any means that are taken as justifying political oppression and accounts for the socio-political pain and trauma such juridical moves generate by creating an alienation between the subjects and the land they inhabit. Rifts and divides become the hallmark of societies experiencing totalitarian controls, thereby adding to the collective pain of any nation oppressed by illegitimate and coercive measures.

Totalitarianism leads to ideological divides. This is sampled in the history of Macondo via the Civil War between the Liberals and Conservatives, which parallels "Colombia's plague of civil wars" (Southey 1827, p. 833). This Civil War also finds equivalents in the Civil Wars that contoured the history of Spain as well as many Latin American countries including Uruguay, Brazil, Chile and Venezuela, etc. It is a manifestation of ideological schisms that engender strife. Macondo's situation is no different. With the Liberals and the Conservatives at loggerheads, the Liberals are pushed into an open and violent confrontation with the military might of the Conservatives. Colonel Aureliano Buendia opts to support the Liberals. Elections are rigged by the soldiers, alluding to the manipulative strategies deployed by totalitarian regimes to efface the rights of the masses. It is in this erasure that another traumatic wound gets etched on the psyche of the masses:

There were almost as many red ballots as blue, but the sergeant left only ten red ones and made up the difference with blue ones. Then they sealed the box again with a new label and the first thing on the following day it was taken to the capital of the province. "The Liberals will go to war," Aureliano said. (Marquez 1970, p.99)

This cheating in the electoral process is a common phenomenon in many Third World Countries such as India, Pakistan, Latin America and Africa, etc. It is the lop-sidedness of the political system that becomes an ironic travesty of the liberal democracies that push people into an ideological war. Elections become a means for the people to shape and influence public policies. The action of the sergeant deprives the subjects from becoming participants of a political process that would shape their future. With a structure of dominance based on party affiliations and political interests leading to the imposition of draconian decisions, resistance invariably surfaces in multiple ways. In this context, an analysis of Colonel Aureliano Buendia as a subject of this power discourse is important.

Colonel Buendia may be seen as one of the “intervening active subjects in their societal contexts as (co-)producers and (co-)agents of discourses and changes to reality” (Jager 2001, p.36). In their co-relation with the discourses shaping their field of existence, these active subjects generate new discourses. By opting for the Liberal cause the Colonel adheres to the notion that

Manipulation not only involves power, but specifically abuse of power, that is, domination. More specifically, manipulation implies the exercise of a form of illegitimate influence by means of discourse: manipulators make others believe or do things that are in the interest of the manipulator, and against the best interests of the manipulated. (van Dijk 2006, p.360)

By siding with the Liberal cause, he endeavours to break down the already existing manipulative power structures which have created repressed subjects. This counters the Conservatives who obliterate their enemies with extreme cruelty. When the army takes over, it shows its might by removing “a woman who had been bitten by a mad dog from her family and killed her with their rifle butts” (Marquez 1970, p.104). The woman is the silent, traumatised subject, shaped by the repressive regime and becomes a topos for the resistance movement to whose cause Colonel Buendia subscribes. The silence of the traumatised masses is articulated as an expression of their forced submission before an oppressive regime. However, what complicates Colonel Buendia’s choice is that in breaking free from the power discourse of one ideology, he becomes a part of another power discourse which too is marked by prejudice thereby leading to repression and violence. “Not madness,” Aureliano said. “War. And don’t call me Aurelito anymore. Now I’m Colonel Aureliano Buendia” (Marquez 1970, p.105). The Colonel appropriates power on his own and creates a “crisis of legitimacy” (Maniruzzaman 1992, p.120) by becoming a self-designated colonel engaged in guerrilla warfare. Colonel Aureliano is a travesty of Che Guevara who had resolved to eliminate the “Capitalist octopuses”

(Anderson 1997, p.121). However, in the novel, the Capitalist octopuses were never vanquished, a fact that is mirrored in the ironic description of the Colonel as a man who had:

organized thirty-two armed uprisings and he lost them all. He had seventeen male children by seventeen different women and they were exterminated one after the other on a single night before the oldest one had reached the age of thirty-five. He survived fourteen attempts on his life, seventy-three ambushes, and a firing squad. He lived through a dose of strychnine in his coffee that was enough to kill a horse. He refused the Order of Merit, which the President of the Republic awarded him. (Marquez 1970, p.106)

As is evident, Colonel Buendia’s stay in power is anything but smooth. Even as he is engaged in a war with the suppressive government, Macondo witnesses the rise of Joe Arcadio as its military ruler who is not averse to showing his predilection for violence to keep the helpless masses under control.

Arcadio ... invented a uniform with the braid and epaulets of a marshal, ... and around his waist he buckled the saber with gold tassels that had belonged to the executed captain. He set up the two artillery pieces at the entrance to town, put uniforms on his former pupils, ... and let them wander through the streets armed in order to give outsiders an impression of invulnerability. It was a double-edged deception, for the government did not dare attack the place for ten months, but when it did it unleashed such a large force against it that resistance was liquidated in a half hour. From the first day of his rule, Arcadio revealed his predilection for decrees. He would read as many as four a day in order to decree and institute everything that came into his head.... In order that no one would doubt the severity of his aims, he ordered a firing squad organized in the square and had it shoot at a scarecrow. At first no one took him seriously. They were, after all, schoolchildren playing at being grown-ups. But one night, when Arcadio went into Catarino’s store, the trumpeter in the group

greeted him with a fanfare that made the customers laugh and Arcadio had him shot for disrespect for the authorities.... Arcadio continued tightening the tourniquet with unnecessary rigor until he became the cruelest ruler that Macondo had ever known. 'Now let them suffer the difference,' Don Apolinar Moscote said on one occasion. "This is the Liberal paradise'. (Marquez1970, pp.107-108; emphasis added)

If the language utilized by Marquez in this extract is scrutinized closely, the expressions "invented", "impression of invulnerability", "double-edged deception, "tightening the tourniquet with unnecessary rigor" and "cruelst ruler", bring to the readers' mind an absolute, self-styled tyrant — a totalitarian regime in the tradition of the Fascism and Communism. Interestingly, both Fascism and Communism, like Arcadio, are by-products of war. What this indicates is that the political ideologies that are generated to counter dominant ideologies tend to be a continuation of the previous hegemonic status quo but with a new name. Regardless of whether it is the Liberal or Conservative cause, it is the ordinary people who pay the consequences. Phrases including "no one would doubt the severity of his aims", "schoolchildren playing at being grown-ups", "This is the Liberal paradise" explicate Marquez's disillusionment with any ideological structure, regardless of its political leanings, that imposes its own meaning on reality. The ideologies that initially articulate a fervor for liberating the masses, in effect, become an even more constraining system, restricting individual freedom.

Arcadio emerges as a social-actor, endeavoring to gain a command over the public minds and to regulate the public discourse while constraining the people to think along his lines alone. As an example of military dictatorship, Macondo finds parallels with many developing countries in Asia, Africa and Latin America that have experienced coercive military regimes. However, the problem with a military regime is its legitimacy which it enforces through violent means such as firing squads, political assassinations and public flogging. The

draconian measures taken by Arcadio's government allude to the inherent instability of a system which merely functions to impose its own version of reality. This form of governance finds parallels in the Roman Empire, when the Praetorian guards were used by the rulers to secure power. However, Maniruzzaman's research into the emergence of consolidation of military dictatorships in different parts of the globe have offered a very important angle for analysis. According to him, military regimes result when there is either a minimum or weak political structure prevalent in a state. Macondo is precisely such a passive town, isolated and alienated, with its primary source of information being the gypsies. In a society that is temporally lagging behind the rest of the globe, the imposition of a military rule is simply an act of will by Arcadio. Interestingly, the people of Macondo submit themselves to the new reality that is modified around them and do not resist, a feature that has historically been sampled in many countries that have experience military takeovers or coup d'états. In addition, while people in Macondo resent the violence, they do not out rightly overthrow the regime of Arcadio. His rule over Macondo bears startling parallels with the regime of Augusto Pinochet in Chile, who established a military junta to exercising an executive authority. Pakistan's history, too, displays similar patterns of repeated military takeovers.

Marquez uses irony couched in humour to highlight the inherently weak personalities of most dictators when Arcadio is shown to be spanked by his grandmother, Ursula Iguaran.

Whipping him without mercy, she chased him to the back of the courtyard, where Arcadio curled up like a snail in its shell. Don Apolinar Moscote was unconscious, tied to the post where previously they had had the scarecrow that had been cut to pieces by shots fired in fun. The boys in the squad scattered, fearful that Úrsula would go after them too. But she did not even look at them. She left Arcadio with his uniform torn, roaring with pain and rage, and she untied Don Apolinar Moscote and took him home. Before leaving

the headquarters she released the prisoners from the stocks. (Marquez 1970, p.108)

In this passage, Marquez launches a satirical attack against the juvenile desire for absolute control displayed by dictators (military or civilian). For Arcadio and most people around him, power is child's play, but just as a child's play leads to atrocities at the end of *The Lord of the Flies*, it leads to political murders and punishments in Macondo as well. What is laughably suggested is that military dictators are like recalcitrant children who can be spanked into obedience. However, the laughter dies when one realises that this juvenile sensibility, when coupled with the interminable desire for money, leads to more appalling forms of oppression and collective trauma for nations enduring dictatorships.

Using gold as a vital metaphor for human greed and lust, Marquez has condensed the entire spectacle of human greed and lust that has moulded the shape of Latin American history in particular and the world's history in general. With the fabled but elusive gold of El Dorado compelling Cortez's Conquistadores to commit acts of utmost torture and violence, gold also remains elusive for the first Jose Arcadio Buendia. Despite his promises that "Very soon we'll have gold enough and more to pave the floors of the house", all he managed to extract was "a suit of fifteenth-century armor which had all of its pieces soldered together with rust and inside of which there was the hollow resonance of an enormous stone-filled gourd" (Marquez 1970, p.2). Gold and its elusiveness refers to the entire spectrum of Imperialism that has contoured Latin America's history. From the golden coins, gold is transposed into the yellow excrement and finally into the yellow bananas that bring the 'gringos' to Macondo. According to John Carson Pettey:

That city of gold would also, then, connect the rusted armor unearthed by Melquiades's magnet and the silvan Spanish galleon discovered by José Arcadio Buendia on his own anabasis at the end of the first chapter. Each of these "golden" items and names relates the history of early European

imperialism prior to the founding of Macondo. (1970, p.164)

In Macondo, not only is the world's colonial past replicated, but its contemporary forms also find expression through depicting the Banana Company Massacre and the subsequent hurricane, symbolic of the socio-economic trauma experienced by its people. Neo-colonialism manifesting itself on the basis of its capitalistic creed becomes evident through the banana company's taking over the life patterns of Macondo. Colonel Aureliano Buendia, who had seen the emptiness of war, witnesses the onslaught of foreign greed through the arrival of Mr. Brown. Thus, New Imperialism manifests itself through the American gringos who are lured to Macondo by the lucrative business of banana harvesting. Macondo's Golden Age recedes into the background as it is drawn towards chaos and anarchy. "Look at the mess we've got ourselves into", Colonel Buendía said at that time, "just because we invited a gringo to eat some bananas" (Marquez 1970, p.234). The banana company is an equivalent of the American corporation, the United Fruit Company, which monopolized the growth of bananas and other tropical and exotic fruits in Latin American countries. The gradual establishment of its roots in Macondo in the name of trade also brings to mind a similar façade enacted by the East India Company. The alliance between profiteering companies and the governments of Third World Countries enables such private foreign corporations to exercise their own monopoly over the lives of the indigenous people, using them as cheap labour and depriving them of their resources. The Martial law machinery in Macondo enables the banana company to continue its work despite local protests. In addition, owing to the symbiosis between such international syndicates and the governments gives such neo-colonial entities the space to legitimize and exercise dominion over the masses so that the "colonialist enclaves" are "retheorize(d)" (Janes 2010, p.455). In the contemporary world, numerous American oil companies working in the Middle East bear witness to the complex synapse

between economics and politics and in turn with the repression of the subject nations. American dependence on oil is allegorically equivalent to the dependence of the banana company on Macondo's bananas, a classic example of neo-colonial economics. This onslaught of foreign powers is a duplicate legacy of Sir Francis Drake and Cortes, another link in an endless chain of mimetic events as the following reference elucidates,

When the banana company arrived, however, the local functionaries were replaced by dictatorial foreigners whom Mr. Brown brought to live in the electrified chicken yard so that they could enjoy, as he explained it, the dignity that their status warranted and so that they would not suffer from the heat and the mosquitoes and the countless discomforts and privations of the town. The old policemen were replaced by hired assassins with machetes. Shut up in his workshop, Colonel Aureliano Buendía thought about those changes and for the first time in his quiet years of solitude he was tormented by the definite certainty that it had been a mistake not to have continued the war to its final conclusion." (Marquez 1970, p.244)

But circumstances become more complicated when the people of Macondo experience genocide at the hands of the Columbian army. This "seismic" (Marquez 1970, p.311) massacre of three thousand residents of Macondo and its erasure from history bespeaks of a politically catalysed amnesia enforced on the public as history is modulated to cohere with the interests of the local and foreign elite. The following quote from the novel bears evidence to this fact,

Nothing has happened in Macondo, nothing has ever happened, and nothing ever will happen.' 'This is a happy town.' In that way they were finally able to wipe out the union leaders. (Marquez 1970, p.316)

The denial embodied in this declaration serves to exert an ideological pressure, by linguistically erasing a traumatic experience, not only from history but also from memory, as it modifies the experiences and perceptions of its subjects, a feat of language which Marquez endeavoured to

display. While referring to this event Bell-Villada writes,

The human damage was minimized by the Conservative press, the government, and the company's supporters; in Macondo it is simply exorcised out of existence. (On my own visit to Aracataca in 1982, I actually met a retired United Fruit timekeeper who passionately assured me that the massacre had never taken place—"it's all just a story," he said.) The five-year rain in the book is initiated by the company in order to evade negotiations; in their respective Indochina wars, the French and later the Americans regularly seeded clouds in order to cause rainstorms for military ends. (1981, p.51)

It is this process of being exorcised out of existence that contributes towards the emergence of collective amnesia in the people of Macondo, an event the next section explicates.

COLLECTIVE AMNESIA: THE TRAUMA OF LOSING MEMORY

An analysis of the collective amnesia infecting Macondo in accordance with CDA reveals that truth remains elusive despite the assertion of eyewitnesses of the tangibility of the massacre. The subjects are not only silenced, their memories are erased as well so that historical accounts end up getting distorted. Interestingly, the event of the massacre finds numerous parallels in world history, the most noticeable being the Jallianwala Bagh massacre in Amritsar in 1919, with the British General Dyer ordering the killing of civilian native Indians, gathered together to celebrate Baisakhi. The total number of people that were killed has been disputed, with the British authorities reducing the number of dead and valorizing the General as a hero. What is noticed is that the tactics of the colonisers in instilling fear and trauma among the masses, remains a common factor throughout the arithmetic calculations of subjugation. Regina Janes also draws parallels of this event with the executions at the end of the Boston Tea Party, the Tiananmen Square massacre and Peterloo that had so shaken P.B. Shelley.

In *One Hundred Years of Solitude*, both the government and the owners of the banana

company work hand in hand to alter reality and shape it in accordance with their own corporate interests, lawyers prove that Mr. Brown was not actually Mr. Brown, this is in effect a gross manipulation that had led to a strike in Macondo. A close reading of the following extract reveals that the masses, in such circumstances, are treated as disposable entities as José Arcadio Segundo wakes up to “discover that he was lying against dead people” after he’s assumed to be dead after the massacre. The novel highlights the event in the following manner,

[T]hose who had put them in the car had had time to pile them up in the same way in which they transported bunches of bananas. Trying to flee from the nightmare, José Arcadio Segundo dragged himself from one car to another in the direction in which the train was heading, and in the flashes of light that broke through the wooden slats as they went through sleeping towns he saw the man corpses, woman corpses, child corpses who would be thrown into the sea like rejected bananas. (Marquez 312)

Reduced to the standing of commodities that can be discarded once their utility is over, the people of Macondo are reprogrammed into forgetting the massacre that targeted their own. However, the generation of amnesia and the restructuring of facts continues unabated in various forms in Macondo in whose one hundred year time frame one sees parallels to Biblical history all enacted in rapid succession. The Biblical Deluge finds its equivalence in the four-year rain that struck Macondo when “It rained for four years, eleven months, and two days.... The sky crumbled into a set of destructive storms and out of the north came hurricanes that scattered roofs about and knocked down walls and uprooted every last plant of the banana groves” (Marquez 1970, p.320). Macondo had to start anew. The post-diluvian Macondo rises again as is exemplified by Aureliano Segundo’s (the Second Adam’s) following observation of the town:

The survivors of the catastrophe, the same ones who had been living in Macondo before it had been struck by the banana company hurricane, were sitting in the middle of the

street enjoying their first sunshine. They still had the green of the algae on their skin and the musty smell of a corner that had been stamped on them by the rain, but in their hearts they seemed happy to have recovered the town in which they had been born. (Marquez 1970, p.337)

An important idea that needs to be explored through this extract is the deliberate erasure of reality through the hurricane which functions as a trope for the effacement of vital chapters in human history and consciousness. The apathy of the masses and the stasis that they had resultantly experienced is powerfully conveyed through the idea of their mouldy skins. While the brutal dominant order is to be blamed for the imposition of its cruel regime, the passivity of the masses is also equally responsible for their decadent condition. The subjects are marked by indifference which makes them passive recipients of the changing social hierarchies around them. This is after all a society where a young girl is forced into prostitution for compensating for accidentally burning down her grandmother’s house. The history of Macondo thus becomes a cache of disasters that cannot be undone, therefore, Macondo has to be deleted. And this deletion begins with the Insomnia Plague that afflicts the people of Macondo. Unable to bear the burden of a cruel history and their own complicity within it, the people of Macondo lose grip on reality. However, they do endeavour to cling onto some memory and sense even as they become immobilised and dysfunctional as they resort to writing down names,

With an inked brush he marked everything with its name: table, chair, clock, door, wall, bed, pan. He went to the corral and marked the animals and plants: cow, goat, pig, hen, cassava, caladium, banana. Little by little, studying the infinite possibilities of a loss of memory, he realized that the day might come when things would be recognized by their inscriptions but that no one would remember their use. Then he was more explicit.... Thus they went on living in a reality that was slipping away, momentarily captured by

words, but which would escape irremediably when they forgot the values of the written letters. (Marquez 1970, p.48; emphasis in original)

As the people of Macondo forget signs and what they signify, their way of ascertaining their world and hence life loses its pre-established meanings. Once this erasure manifests itself, the very environment within which the characters function becomes alien. Parallels to this event abound in colonial history as the Spaniards imposed their linguistic hegemony over the oral culture of the Aztecs. In the Indian Subcontinent as well, Macaulay imposed the English language as a replacement of Persian, Arabic, Hindi and Urdu so that specific version of reality could be imposed which cohered with the interests of the British colonial machinery. Linguistic alienation became a strategy for imposing cultural trauma among the colonised subjects, breaking down bonds of unity in a society and inducing a disconnect between themselves and the world they live in.

Macondo at the beginning of the novel is like ancient Mesopotamia, comprised of a united group of people, speaking a language that they all understand and improving their understanding of their world through a unanimously agreed upon neoterism. Language thus becomes a means for creating “truth conditions” (Devitt and Sterelny 1999, p.21) in which all the compositional elements of a syntax create meanings. These compositional elements come to make collective sense only towards the conclusion of the novel but by then their unity and the coherent understanding of the world they live in has been disintegrated. That is why Arcadio Segundo and the rest could not comprehend Melquiades’ abstruse manuscript predicting the future of Macondo because Arcadio’s human experience had not, as yet, acquired an integrated wholeness. It is only when the saga of the Buendias reaches its end that Aureliano Babilonio is able to construct the ultimate meaning of the text. He realises that Melquiades had left behind “the history of the family, written by Melquíades, down to the most trivial details, one hundred years ahead of time”

(Marquez 1970, p.421). Yet, even as he receives full insight into his family’s history that is characterized by macabre events and incest, the moment of full illumination is immediately erased in the tornado that strikes Macondo at the moment of Babilonio’s realisation. Thus erasure is never undone and memory is never preserved.

[H]e began to decipher the instant that he was living, deciphering it as he lived it, prophesying himself in the act of deciphering the last page of the parchments, as if he were looking into a speaking mirror. Then he skipped again to anticipate the predictions and ascertain the date and circumstances of his death. Before reaching the final line, however, he had already understood that he would never leave that room, for it was foreseen that the city of mirrors (or mirages) would be wiped out by the wind and exiled from the memory of men at the precise moment when Aureliano Babilonia would finish deciphering the parchments, and that everything written on them was unrepeatabe since time immemorial and forever more, because races condemned to one hundred years of solitude did not have a second opportunity on earth. (Marquez 1970, p.422)

And since the people of Macondo never had any second opportunity and therefore, could avail no chance of undoing the trauma they had endured through an internalisation of their oppression, the only solution was their descent into irreversible oblivion. It is this outcome that needs closer scrutiny.

MARQUEZ’S CUMULATIVE VIEW OF HUMANITY

While many critics view *One Hundred Years of Solitude* as a “socialist reading of Latin American countries (qtd. In Posada-Carbo 1998, p.398), the analysis presented above refutes this standing. This is because had it been a pure endorsement of the socialist vision, the novel would not have ended with an apocalyptic rendition of Macondo’s destruction, rather the events would have ended with the creation of an ideal Communist state. According to Bressler (2007), “Marxism details a plan for changing the world from a place of bigotry, hatred, and

conflict because of class struggle to a classless society in which wealth, opportunity, and education are available for everyone” (p.192). Yet, in Macondo, a classless society is created with the tornado destroying the entire human race. The disillusionment of the shadowy Colonel Aureliano becomes a reflection of the failure of Socialism to offer a panacea to the problems of the masses. At the same time, the text also expresses its disgruntlement with the Capitalist venture of economic control. Therefore, in order to do justice to Marquez’s vision for humanity, one needs to review these contradictions from another angle.

Marquez simply endeavoured to present a text that would not merely present reality vis-à-vis the past, but also in relation to a possible future. The novel interacts with what Foucault terms as the ‘said and the not-said’. In this paradigm, the while the future has not as yet been said, but it does reflect logical possibilities emerging out of the urgencies being generated in the prevalent circumstances. The work in itself ought not to be taken as a pessimistic view of humanity, however, it may be taken as a warning bell tolling to alert mankind about the upcoming catastrophe unless they change course. While the novel deconstructs Macondo’s history, subjecting it to an absolute erasure, the reader needs to take cognizance of the fact that it is the reader’s present that the novel deconstructs for in Macondo’s destruction lies an explicit warning for the world we live in — a world that is marred by overt and covert hegemonic apparatuses. The crucial point is that it is not only the colonizers and dictators who are to blame, the passivity of the colonised and the subjects of dictatorships is to be held accountable too. What the novel illustrates is that since both are culpable, a new world order can only be created if there is a complete extermination of the prevalent system and the creation of a blank socio-political canvas for the world to etch a new history and trajectory. The novel also suggests that we need to read the present before it becomes history and destroys us.

WORKS CITED

1. Anderson, J. L. (1997). *Che Guevara: A revolutionary life*. Grove Atlantic.
2. Bell-Villada, G. H. 1981. Names and narrative pattern in “One Hundred Years of Solitude”. *Latin American Literary Review*, 9(18), 37-46. Stable URL: <<http://www.jstor.org/stable/20119255>>.
3. Bloom, H. 2009. Introduction. Bloom’s modern critical interpretations: Gabriel Garcia Marquez’s *One Hundred Years of Solitude*. Ed. Harold Bloom. Bloom’s *Literary Criticism*.
4. Bressler, C. E. *Literary criticism: An introduction to theory and practice* (4th ed.). Pearson Prentice Hall.
5. Devitt, M. & Sterelny, D. 1999. *Language and reality: An Introduction to the philosophy of language* (2nd ed.). Blackwell Publishers.
6. Fairclough, N. 2001. *Critical Discourse Analysis as a method in social scientific research. Methods of Critical Discourse Analysis* (M. Meyer & R. Wodak, Eds). Sage Publications.
7. Foucault, M. 2004. *Archaeology of knowledge*. Routledge. (Original work published 1969).
8. Giordano, E. A. 1988. Play and playfulness in García Márquez’ “One Hundred Years of Solitude”. *Rocky Mountain Review of Language and Literature*, 42(4), 217-229, URL: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/1346974>.
9. J., Siegfried. 2001. *Discourse and knowledge. Methods of Critical Discourse Analysis* (M. Meyer & R. Wodak, Eds). Sage Publications.
10. Janes, R. 2010. Revisiting García Márquez among the bananas. *Modern Language Quarterly* 71(4). DOI 10.1215/00267929-2010-023.
11. Orwell, G. 1949. *Nineteen Eighty Four*. Houghton Mifflin Harcourt.
12. Pettey, J. C. 2000. Some implications of yellow and gold in García Márquez’s “One Hundred Years of Solitude”: Color symbolism, onomastics, and anti-idyll’.

- Revista Hispánica Moderna 53(1), 162-178. Stable URL: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/30203613>.
13. Posada-Carbo, E. 1998. Fiction as history: The Bananeras and Gabriel Garcia Marquez's One Hundred Years Of Solitude. *Journal of Latin American Studies*, 30(2), 395-414. Stable URL: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/158531>.
 14. Southey, T. 1827 *Chronological history of the West Indies*, volume 3. Longman, Rees, Orme, Brown and Green.
 15. Maniruzzaman, T. 1992. *Encyclopaedia of government and politics*, volume I (M. Hawkesworth & M. Kogan, Eds.). Routledge.
 16. Marquez, G. G. 1970. *One hundred years of solitude* (G. Rabassa, Trans.). Penguin.
 17. van Dijk, T. 2006. *Discourse and manipulation*. Discourse and Society. Sage Publications.
 18. White, H. 1973. *Metahistory: The historical imagination in Nineteenth-Century Europe*. Johns Hopkins University Press.